

money to train the Afghan and Iraqi security forces to take on more responsibility for the defense of their countries; they include money for intelligence operations to protect our troops on the battlefield.

Pentagon officials have warned Congress that the continued delay in funding our troops will soon begin to have a damaging impact on the operations of this Department. The warning has been laid out for the United States Congress to hear.

Recently, Secretary Gates sought to clear up any misperception that the Department can fund our troops for an indefinite period simply by shifting money around. In fact, Congress limits how much money can be moved from one account to the other. Secretary Gates has already notified Congress that he will transfer money from accounts used to fund other activities of the military services to pay for current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan—and no more money can be moved. So he has directed the Army and Marine Corps to develop a plan to lay off civilian employees, to terminate contracts, and to prepare our military bases across the country for reduced operations. These are contingency steps that a prudent manager must take.

Secretary Gates and America's senior military officials have made a reasoned case to Congress for the funds they need to keep the military running. They have carefully explained the need to plan prudently should those funds not be forthcoming. Secretary Gates puts it this way: "The Defense Department is like the world's biggest supertanker. It cannot turn on a dime, and I cannot steer it like a skiff."

The American people expect us to work together to support our troops. That's what they want. They do not want the Government to create needless uncertainty for those defending our country and uncertainty for their families. They do not want disputes in Washington to undermine our troops in Iraq just as they're seeing clear signs of success.

Here in Washington, leaders have a responsibility to send the right message to the rest of the world. Let us tell our enemies that America will do what it takes to defeat them. Let us tell Afghans and Iraqis that we will stand with them as they take the fight

to our common enemies. Let us tell our men and women in uniform that we will give them what they need to succeed in their missions, without strings and without delay.

I ask Congress to provide this essential funding to our troops before the Members leave on their Christmas vacation. And I thank the members of this Department for their hard work, their sacrifice, their courage, and their dedication to peace.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:59 p.m. at the Pentagon.

Statement on the Death of Former Representative Henry J. Hyde

November 29, 2007

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of former Congressman Henry Hyde. From his service in the Navy during World War II until his retirement from the U.S. House of Representatives last year, Henry Hyde led a life devoted to public service. During more than 30 years as a Congressman, he represented the people of Illinois with character and dignity and always stood for a strong and purposeful America. This fine man believed in the power of freedom, and he was a tireless champion of the weak and forgotten. He used his talents to build a more hopeful America and promote a culture of life. Earlier this month, in recognition of his good and purposeful life, I was proud to award Henry Hyde the Medal of Freedom.

Congressman Hyde's passing represents a great loss to the people of Illinois and our Nation, and our thoughts and prayers are with his family in this sad hour.

Proclamation 8207—World AIDS Day, 2007

November 29, 2007

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

On World AIDS Day, we reaffirm our commitment to fighting and preventing HIV/